

Fun Facts: Black (African American) History Month



What's the Age?

Roughly 35 years – The median age of the Black or African American population in 2021.

Birthplace Populations of Famous African Americans

- **Kenny Washington** – Los Angeles, California (Pop. – **3,898,747**)
First Black NFL player.
- **Shirley A. Chisholm** – Brooklyn, New York (Pop. – **2,736,074**)
First Black woman elected to the United States Congress in 1968; she helped collect responses in Brooklyn for the 1970 Census.
- **Benjamin O. Davis Sr.** – Washington, D.C. (Pop. – **689,545**)
First African American general in the U.S. Army.
- **Norbert Rillieux** – New Orleans, Louisiana (Pop. – **383,997**)
Most noted for inventing an energy-efficient means of evaporating water.

Origin of Black History Month

American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week to commemorate and celebrate the contributions to our nation made by people of African descent. It was first celebrated during the second week of February in 1926 to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln (February 12) and abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass (February 14). In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded to a month. Since then, U.S. presidents have proclaimed February National Black (African American) History Month.

Population

About 12% or 41 million – The number of Blacks or African Americans in the United States in 2020. These places have among the highest percentage of residents for this racial group:

41%
District of
Columbia



37%
Mississippi



Education on the Rise

Percent of the Black population 25 and over who completed high school or college:

- 2021 – **90%**
- 2020 – **89%**
- 2010 – **84%**
- 2000 – **79%**
- 1990 – **66%**



Occupations

Held by Blacks 16 years old and older:

- **About 3 out of 10** (35%) work in management, professional and related occupations (includes sales managers, computer programmers, teachers).
- **About 2 out of 10** (22%) work in service occupations (includes police officers, janitors, and hairdressers/barbers).
- **About 2 out of 10** (20%) work in sales and office occupations (includes receptionists, mail clerks, and library assistants).
- **About 2 out of 10** (18%) work in production, transportation, and material moving occupations (includes painting workers, bus drivers, and packers/packageers).



Black-Owned Businesses

140,918 – The number of Black-owned businesses.

The Health Care and Social Assistance sector (includes dentist and doctors' offices) had the highest number (**38,319**) of businesses with majority Black ownership, making up **27.5%** of all Black-owned businesses.



Notes: All the data on this page, except the birthplace populations, are for the Black or African American alone population. Data are rounded for educational attainment and occupations and may not equal 100%.

Sources: The U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Decennial Census, CPS Historical Time Series Tables, 2019 Current Population, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, and U-S-History.com.